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INDIGENOUS ISSUES

Written statement* submitted by Nord-Sud XXI, a non-governmental organizations in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[14 January 2002]

*This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Rights negation and cultural genocide in Mexico

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Rights negation and cultural genocide in Mexico

1. The Mexican indigenous as being a former nation, have lived for centuries in the lands and territories they now inhabit. From the Spanish invasion to nowadays, they live in permanent fight to stay, to survive, to rescue and defend this lands and territories that have seen them born.

2. They built up during centuries a rich culture where they have learnt and understood that, together with the nature, they form a complete and harmonious whole. That's why, their footstep and walk haven't changed the environment nor damaged the mother Earth and, on the contrary, they still take care of all the nature richness. They learnt and understood also that as former nation they have built a culture based on a way to conceive the world starting from the elder's wisdom and that have promote a deep love for the mother Earth and it's natural fruits.

3. Their culture, their land and territories are still being threatened. From the brutal invasion it hasn,t become another single chance for these people to live in the respect and harmony that existed before that barbarous invasion; most of their social organization and communal work has been smashed; their language, religion and self-conscience as a nation has been modified and it is being pushed to destruction.

4. It's visible that in all the Mesoamerican territory where big cities and culture used to exist and live together before the invasion, today, there is just poor, humiliated villages reduced to an existence of discrimination that reaches genocide.

5. The destruction of their organization and communal life has been the cause of their ruin, the displacement of their grandeur and it's replacement for misery and vassalage.

6. The successive governments of the country, from the Spanish invasion to nowadays, have deprived them of all cultivable areas and have reduced them to live in the mountain range, in the forests and in the deserts, subject to constant aggressions and to a thousand types of exploitation; kicked out from their own territories. Non of these governments have recognized them as the former nation they are, not even as proprietors of those mountain ranges, forests or deserts that keep the biggest natural and biological richness ever; nor respect the elemental security that their lives need.

7. These people, owners of the lands, woods and waters that give life to the cities, can't make use of these resources for lack of technology and money, having to sell them off chip or accept illegal expropriations for modest indemnifications; powerless when faced with the lack of agricultural justice; faced with the lack of courts, response to recognize and entitle their communal properties; faced with the lack of solutions to the very old limit conflicts that divide those nations, and that, almost always, have been provoked and fomented by the ones with the political power and the money owners.

8. Recognizing the will of these nations to live keeping their own rule systems, and their elementary forms of organization and communal life; the will to keep a relation in harmony with the mother Earth; and the growing solidarity of all the Mexican and worldwide indigenous nations to face together a neoliberal globalisation system that reduces and eliminates human being, that destroys and kills all the ways where individuals and societies can express completely. The only way to wholly reconstruct Indian nations is rebuilding and strengthening the ancestral relationship that they had and keep on having with Mother Earth.

9. Rebuild the human and integral relationship with the Mother Earth, means to reconstruct the fraternal relationship with the rest of the Indian nations, all brothers at the very beginning, in culture, in will and in suffering, to supply ones with the others the weaknesses, to put together each breath in the same wind and each voice in an invincible scream that allows them to transform -with the whole of the Mexican nation- the Country in a Country for all.

10. For 509 years the history of all the indigenous nations is a history of fight, work and love for the earth; but also a history of permanent resistance as it's proved by the constant rebellions in 1530, 1540, 1766, 1810, 1910, 1934, 1988, 1991, and the actual fight for the recognition of the indigenous rights and culture started on 1994.

11. The Mexican Nation's will is expressed in the subscription of the Work International Organisation's Hundred Sixty Nine Agreement, that settles the only way in which this agreement signing States must legalize in the matter of indigenous nations, respecting their own social structure and culture, together with the ownership and occupation of their land, territories and natural resources.

12. The Mexican indigenous expressed their disagreement to the Salinist counter-reformation to the 27th constitutional article where it was claimed the unprescriptive, unalienable and non-impoundable character of their communal lands.

13. Likewise, they also expressed their will (Nurío Indigenous National Congress and P'urhémpecha Nation,s pronouncement) to recognize the San Andres, Agreements signed up as minimum agreements between the National Liberation Zapatist Army representatives and the Federal Government signed up on February 16th, 1996 in San Andrés Sacam,chen de los Pobres, Chiapas; and the will to recognize the Pacification and Concord Commission (COCOPA) proposal about Indigenous Culture and Rights. The Union's Council when approving a Constitution's modification that doesn't include the San Andres' Agreement has betrayed this one.

14. With that constitutional law it could have been possible to formally stop the abuse and greed, non consulting them anything, command them always without even knowing who is commanding and why, imposing them a development that only benefits and strengthens other ones, everything that denies them a place for being different, for not submitting to the actual health system that doesn,t accept and even condemns their traditional medicine, the urge to turn everything into merchandise, to the system that judges and commands their lives with written laws that they are ignorant of, to the selfishness that interferes the cooperation and diversity in which they live their communal lives.

15. And denying them their rights they are denying and reminding everyone that beyond the colours and signs, against the Indians ore the different ones, against the ones who fight and resist for a better place for all, the power of money and pride will always be joint and ready to deny any right, respect, place where to grow in, be an example or get rid off their dominion.

16. Been this facts exposed, North South XXI asks the Mexican Government to respect the agreements signed in San Andrés (COCOPA's initiative)